

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 12-17 and 19-23 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 18 has been cancelled by this amendment, and claim 23 has been added. No new matter has been added.

Applicants note that a number of editorial amendments have been made to the specification and abstract for grammatical and general readability purposes. Due to the number of changes made, a substitute specification and abstract are submitted herewith. No new matter has been added. Also enclosed is a marked-up copy of the original specification and abstract showing the changes incorporated into the substitute specification and abstract.

I. Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings for the reasons set forth on page 2 of the Office Action. In particular, the Examiner has indicated that Figures 5 and 6 should be identified as --Prior Art--. Applicants are submitting herewith replacement sheets for Figures 5 and 6 which included the --Prior Art-- legend. Accordingly, Applicants kindly request that the objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. Claim Rejections

A. Claims 12-14, 16 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Abe et al. (US 5,978,546); and claims 18 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. in view of Kroeger et al. (US 6,178,317).

By this amendment, Applicants note that the features recited in claim 18 have been

incorporated into claim 12, and that claim 18 has been canceled. Accordingly, claim 12 now recites the feature of a delay circuit provided between said analog audio signal reproduction means and said audio output switching means, wherein a delay time of said delay circuit is controlled based on VTR tape speed information.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has recognized that Abe does not disclose or suggest the above-noted feature, but has taken the position that Kroeger cures this deficiency of Abe (see Office Action at page 7). Applicants respectfully disagree.

In particular, regarding Kroeger, Applicants note that this reference discloses a method for mitigating intermittent interruptions in a radio broadcasting system by utilizing a primary radio signal and a redundant radio signal, in which the redundant radio signal path is provided with a delay circuit 116 (see col. 1, lines 64-65; col. 2, lines 2-6; and Fig. 5).

In this regard, as shown in Fig. 5, an audio signal from an audio source 110 is output to a digital encoder 122, and the output from digital encoder 122 is sent to modulator 160 and digital decoder 126 (see col. 7, lines 17-24). As explained in Kroeger, the digital decoder 126 performs digital-to-analog conversion, with the output thereof passing through delay circuit 116, such that the redundant audio signal is exposed to the same processing delays as the primary audio signal (see Fig. 5 and col. 7, lines 24-31).

Based on the foregoing description of Kroeger, Applicants note that while Kroeger discloses a radio broadcasting system that utilizes a delay circuit in order to expose an analog signal and a digital signal to the same processing delays, that Kroeger does not disclose or in any way suggest that a delay time of such a delay circuit is controlled based on VTR tape speed

information.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art references, either alone or in combination, do not teach, suggest or otherwise render obvious the above-noted feature recited in amended claim 12 of a delay circuit provided between said analog audio signal reproduction means and said audio output switching means, wherein a delay time of said delay circuit is controlled based on VTR tape speed information.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 12 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested. Claims 13, 14, 16, 19 and 21, as well as new claim 23, depend from claim 12 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

B. Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. (US 5,978,546) in view of Nakamura (US 5,299,267).

Claim 15 depends from claim 12. Applicants submit that Nakamura fails to cure the deficiencies of Abe, as discussed above, with respect to claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 15 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

C. Claims 17, 20 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abe et al. (US 5,978,546) in view of Yanagawa et al. (US 6,178,288).

Claims 17, 20 and 22 depend from claim 12. Applicants submit that Yanagawa fails to cure the deficiencies of Abe, as discussed above, with respect to claim 12. Accordingly,


Applicants submit that claims 17, 20 and 22 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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